



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning
Commission

Barb Wilson, Acting Director
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

City of Seattle
Seattle Design
Commission

Guillermo Romano, Executive Director
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Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

September 29, 2004

Mayor Gregory Nickels
Seattle City Council
600 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124

Dear Mayor Nickels and Seattle City Council:

The Seattle Design and Planning Commissions would like to thank you for the opportunity to brief the Mayor's Office and Council in late July on each Commission's recommendation on a preferred alternative for the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement project. Both Commissions offered similar final recommendations, encouraging consideration of the full tunnel option, while emphasizing the importance of the tunnel design details at both the north and south ends. Separately, each Commission provided additional detail based on their distinct fields of expertise. It is our hope that our collaboration to date has provided effective guidance to City decision makers in finding the best possible solution for this project for the state, the region and the city.

At the July 21, 2004 briefing of the Mayor's Office, Deputy Mayor Ceis offered the following:

- Asked for the continued advice and support from the two Commissions on the City's many concurrent transportation projects, including the Viaduct;
- Welcomed input on urban design issues associated with the Viaduct;
- Encouraged Commissioners to further share the results of their extensive review process and educate appropriate stakeholders, citizen groups and decision makers.

At the City Council Committee of the Whole meeting on July 26, 2004 Councilmember Steinbrueck made four points:

- Requested that WSDOT respond to DC/PC DEIS comments;
- Requested help to enable Council to identify the core alternatives, the givens and those items that are non-negotiable;
- Supported the DC/PC rejection of the surface and aerial alternatives, and
- Urged Council to make a formal request to add a no-highway alternative to the EIS.

At two Council Committee of the Whole meetings in September, Councilmember Conlin invited both Commissions to discuss proposed Guiding Principles for decisions related to the Viaduct/Seawall project. The Commissions were pleased to see many of their recommendations included in Council's proposed principles discussed at the Joint Mayor/Council/WSDOT Forum on September 24, 2004.

Our collaboration to date has been very helpful in affording joint perspective in assessing this significant project. Both Commissions are interested and committed to providing their continued expertise as the City and WSDOT take the next steps on this project. It is important to note the separate but continuing roles of the Design and Planning Commissions as the project becomes ever more real. Attached is an outline of the next steps that we envision.

We welcome your comments and look forward to continuing to assist your offices with the further review and evaluation of the Alaskan Way Viaduct/Seawall Project as it moves forward.

Sincerely,



David Spiker, Chair
Design Commission



George Blomberg, Chair
Planning Commission

cc: Tim Ceis, Mayor's Office
Grace Crunican, SDOT
Diane Sugimura, DPD
Bob Chandler, SDOT
John Rahaim, DPD
Steve Pearce, SDOT

Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project
September 29, 2004
Seattle Design and Planning Commissions - Next Steps

Design Commission next steps:

- Review the Viaduct Preferred Alternative design in regularly scheduled Commission meetings after the Preferred Alternative has been determined this fall and as the design work proceeds. Regularly forward updates to City Council and the Mayor to ensure meaningful and timely input from the Commission.
- Help the City identify or review a clear list of desired public benefits from the Viaduct project that will help reinforce the City's interest in the Preferred Alternative in its ongoing dialogue with WSDOT.
- Encourage the City to consider establishing a Waterfront Review District that would include the Viaduct, Colman Dock redevelopment, Aquarium, and open spaces to ensure consistent review in the future. Jurisdictional issues currently make that impossible, but the result is inconsistent design in what should be a focal point for the City. This discussion needs to include the City, WSDOT and the Port to effectively lay the foundation for a successful and coherent Central Waterfront Plan for the City. Grant purview of design review to the Design Commission.
- Lead a workshop later this fall or early winter with the Viaduct/Seawall Team and Central Waterfront Plan IDT Work Group leaders to fully assess urban design and environmental issues and optimal surface treatment options with the Preferred Alternative.

Planning Commission next steps:

- Work with City officials to push for a more detailed examination of economic impacts to the waterfront and adjacent areas as well as the industrial and commercial areas affected by the north and south segments of the AWW. This corridor has been identified as having an important effect on the regional, state and national economy. This analysis will be critically important in the City's rationale for public investment and its participation with the State of Washington and the Federal government.
- Provide further advice and recommendation, as outlined in the September 24 Forum, on the ways in which the City can consider the current range of alternatives to form the best overall package, pulling features from among the alternatives where needed, and to clearly identify core elements and features of the project that are non-negotiable.
- Provide advice to the Viaduct project team and City officials in considering a broader set of alternative construction scenarios that will include exploring cost savings that could be accrued by considering ways to shorten the construction period and costs.
- Review the Viaduct Preferred Alternative in regularly scheduled Commission meetings in order to encourage transportation and land use policies that ensure the project has a positive impact on the transportation network; the character of the area between the waterfront and adjacent neighborhoods; and the health of an economically diverse waterfront.

Ongoing Collaboration

- Partner together this fall to educate decision makers and the general public on the important design and environmental issues, and community development, regional growth management and urban livability issues associated with the replacement of the viaduct and seawall and the redevelopment of the Central Waterfront. This may include participating in a variety of public forums and meeting with City, State and Federal officials to share the results of the joint DC/PC Viaduct reviews to date.